

for in my tyme a servant was I oon.
And therefore, syn I knowe of loves peyne,
And woot how soore it kan a man distreine,
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his laas,
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespass,
At requeste of the queene, that kneleth heere,
And eek of Emelye, my suster deere.
And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere,
That nevere mo ye shal my contree dere,
Ne make werre upon me, nyght ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may:
I yow foryeve this trespass every deel.
And they him sworn his axying, faire and weel,
And hym of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:
To speke of roial lynage and richesse,
Though that she were a queene ora princesse,
Ech of you bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees,
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this strif and jalousye,
Ye woot yourself she may nat wedden two
Hones, though ye fighten everemo:
That oon of you, al be hym looth or lief,
He moot go pipen in an yvy leef:
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jalouse ne so wrothe;
And forthy, I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destynce
As hym is shape, and herkneth in what wyse;
Lo heere your ende of that I shal devyse:
Withouten any repplacioun,
If that you liketh, take it for the beste,
That everich of you shal goon where hym leste
frelly withouten raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
Everich of you shal brynge an hundred knyghtes,
Armed for lystes up at alle rightes,
At redy to darreine hire by bataille,
And this bihote I yow withouten faille
Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knyght,
That wheither of yow bothe that hath myght,
This is to seyn, that wheither he or thow
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie, or out of lystes dryve,
Thanne shal I yve Emelye to wyve
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
Tho lystes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe
As I shal evene juge been and trewe.
Ye shul noon oother ende with me maken
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thynketh this is weel ysaid,
Seyeth youre avys, and holdeth you apayd;
This is youre ende and youre conclusioun.
Who looketh lightly now but Palamoun?
Who spryngeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who kouth the telle, or who kouth the endite,
The joye that is makid in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But down on knees wente every maner wight
And thonken hym with al hir herte and myght;

And namely the Thebans often sithe.
And thus with good hope and with herte blithe
They take hir leve, and homward goone they ride
To Thebes with his olde walles wyde.

Explicit pars secunda. Sequitur pars tertia.

TROWE men wolde deme
it negligence,
If I foryete to tellen the
dispenche
Of Theseus, that gooth so
bisily
To maken up the lystes
roially:
That swich a noble theatre
as it was,

I dar wel seyn that in this world there nas.
The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon and dyched al withoute.
Round was the shape in manere of compaas,
ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty paas,
That whan a man was set on o degree,
He lette nat his felawe for to see.

Estward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,
Westward, right swich another in the opposit.
And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
for in the lond ther was no crafty man
That geometrie or arismetrik kan,

Ne portreitour, ne kervere of ymages,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages,
The theatre for to maken and devyse.
And for to doon his ryte and sacrifice,
He estward hath upon the gate above,
In worshippe of Venus, goddesses of love,

Doon make an auter and an oratorie;
And westward, in the mind and in memorie
Of Mars, he makid hath right swich another,
That coste largely of gold a fother.
And northward, in a touret on the wal,
Of alabastre whit and reed coral,

An oratorie riche for to see,
In worshippe of Dyane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus doon wrought in noble wyse.

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
The noble kerving and the portreitures,
The shape, the contenance, and the figures,
That weren in thise oratories thre.

FIRST, in the temple of Venus maye,
to se,
Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to
biholde,
The broken slepes, and the sikkes
colde,

The sacred teeris, and the waymentyng,
The firy strokes of the desirynge,
That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;
The othes that hir covenants assuren.
Plessaunce and hope, Desir, foolhardynesse,
Beautee and Youthe, Bauderie, Richesse,
Charmes and force, Lesynges, flaterye,
Dispense, Bisynesse, and Jalousye
That wered of yclewe gooldes a gerland,
And a cokkow sittynge on hir hand;

festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I reken and rekene shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo than I kan make of mencion;
for soothly al the mount of Cithereoun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellynge,
Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,
With al the gardyn and the lustynesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of kyng Salamon,
And eek the grete strengthe of Eracles,
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes,
Ne of Turnus with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, kaytyf in servage.

MAS may ye seen that Wysdom ne Richesse,
Beautee ne Sleighte, Strengthe, ne Hardy-
nesse,

Ne may with Venus holde champartye,
for as hir list the world than may she gye.
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde, Alas!

Suffiseth heere ensamples oon or two,
And though I koude rekene a thousand mo.

THE statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked, fletyng in the large see,
And fro the navel doun al covered was
With waves grene, and brighte as any glas.

A citole in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fressh and wel smellynge,
Above hir heed hir dowves flikerynge.

Biforn hire stood hire sone Cupido,
Upon his shuldres wynges hadde he two,
And bynd he was, as it is often scene;
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.

WY sholde I noght as wel eek telle
yow al
The portreiture that was upon the
wal
Withinne the temple of myghty
Mars the rede?

Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty region,
Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

FIRST, on the wal was peynted a forest
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,
With knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to biholde,
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough;

And downward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotent,
Wrought al of burned steel, of which thentree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see;
And therout cam a rage, and such a veze,
That it made all the gates for to rese.

The northren lyght in al the dores shoon,
for wyndowe on the wal ne was ther noon
Thurgh which men myghten any light discerne.

The dores were al of adamant eterne,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With iren tough; and for to make it strong,
Every pyler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne greet, of iren bright and shene.
Ther saugh I first the derke ymaginyng
Of felonye, and al the compassyng;
The cruel ire, reed as any gleede;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;
The smylere with the knyfe under the cloke;
The shepne brennyng with the blake smoke;
The tresoun of the mordryng in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes al bledde;
Contek, with bloody knyfe and sharpe manace;
Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place.
The sleere of hymself yet saugh I ther,
His herte/blood hath bathed al his heer;
The nayl ydryven in the shode anyght;
The colde deeth, with mouth gapyng upright.
Amyddes of the temple sat Meschaunce,
With disconfort and sory contenance.

ET saugh I Woodnesse, laughynge in his
rage,

Armed compleint, outhees, & fiers outrage,
The careyne in the bush, with throte ycorve;
A thousand slayn, and not of qualm ystorve;
The tiraunt with the pray by force yraft;
The toun destroyed, ther was nothing laft.
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesters;
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook yscalded for al his longe ladel.

DOGHT was foryeten by thin fortune of
Marte;

The cartere overryden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also of Martes divisioun,
The barbour, and the bocher; and the smyth
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his styth.
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saugh I Conquest sittynge in greet honour
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
hangynge by a soutil twynes threed.

DEPEYNTED was the slaughtre of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;

Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther biforn
By manasyng of Mars, right by figure;
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be sleyn or elles deed for love.
Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may nat rekene hem alle, though I wolde.

THE statue of Mars upon a carte stood,
Armed, and looked grym as he were wood;
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that oother Rubeus.
This god of armes was arrayed thus:

A wolf ther stood biforn hym at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet.
With soutil pencil was depeynt this storic,
In redoutyng of Mars and of his glorie.